

Pwyllgor Newid Hinsawdd, yr Amgylchedd a Seilwaith /
Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee
Bil drafft Diogelu'r Amgylchedd (Cynhyrchion Plastig Untro) (Cymru)/
Draft Environmental Protection (Single-use Plastic Products)(Wales) Bill
SUP_24
Ymateb gan Cyngor Sir Ddinbych / Evidence from Denbighshire County Council

Thank you for inviting our views on the Draft Environmental Protection (Single-use Plastic Products)(Wales) Bill. Please find below comments from Denbighshire County Council. Please forgive the submission in English only, this is due to the short period available for comment and the holiday period.

Denbighshire County Council confirms its ambition to reduce the use of single use plastics in the county, and that the ambitions of the draft Bill will support this. It is noted that the draft Bill specifies an initial phase of Single-Use Plastic (SUP) products, the supply of which will be either banned or restricted in Wales very shortly after the Bill comes into force, and that these products are listed in Column 1 of Table 1 in the Schedule. It is also noted that the draft Bill also includes a power which will allow Welsh Ministers to add or remove SUP products or exemptions in the future via regulations. Therefore, we have included comment on some types of SUPs that are not specifically mentioned in Column 1 of Table 1 in the Schedule. That said, we have not had sufficient time to comprehensively cover all potential SUPs that could potentially be added in future. It is therefore essential the adequate consultation takes place with stakeholders before any additional SUPs are added in future.

Impact on school catering services:

1. Plastic Cutlery (included in Column 1 of Table 1 in the Schedule):

Plastic Cutlery is used in some secondary schools due to a lack of space for pupils to sit and eat. Plastic cutlery enables pupils to go elsewhere within the school, or to go outside to eat their lunch. Plastic cutlery is also used in schools where pupils do not return stainless steel cutlery, resulting in a shortage and an ongoing cost of replacing cutlery in secondary schools. The former issue is the more difficult one to overcome/manage because it is an infrastructure issue.

2. Straws (included in Column 1 of Table 1 in the Schedule):

Although straws are not purchased by the School Catering service, tetra pack drinks have straws attached to the carton to enable the customer to consume the drink. It is not clear from the draft Bill whether the initial is to therefore prohibit the sale of drinks in tetra packs?

3. Drinks in SUP bottles (not included in Column 1 of Table 1 in the Schedule):

Currently the School Catering Service in Denbighshire relies on income generated from the sales of drinks in secondary schools to help keep the prices charged to Parent/Guardians/Pupils in schools across the County as affordable as possible. Drinks are generally sold in single-use plastic containers, although some cans and tetra pack drinks are also available. An average of almost 500,000 drinks are sold each year, which clearly generates a lot of single-use material. There are two main ways in which the sale of drinks in single-use containers could be eradicated:

- i) by not selling drinks in our schools (resulting in a c.£220,000 revenue pressure for the council; or
- ii) by selling drinks that are decanted into re-usable containers.

Option ii was recent trialled in one of our High Schools and was deemed not to a viable option to roll out across all of our High Schools. Many of our schools lack the space for the equipment; it is calculated to create a comparable financial pressure; and many Head Teachers like pupils to purchase drinks in secure re-sealable bottles because they do not want to see pupils with open drinks in class. Therefore, adding SUP bottles to the Column 1 of Table 1 in the Schedule in future would have a significant financial impact on the council, unless there was financial support provided by Welsh Government.